

Timeline (1981-1988)

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1981

June

On June 5, "Pneumocystis Pneumonia—Los Angeles," by Dr. Michael Gottlieb and colleagues of University of California at Los Angeles, appeared in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (vol. 30, pp. 250-52), a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publication. This was the first article about AIDS in the medical literature.

June

On June 16, the first AIDS patient seen at the NIH was admitted under Dr. Thomas Waldmann's National Cancer Institute (NCI) Omnibus Metabolism Branch protocol.

July

A Task Force on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections was established at the CDC under the direction of Dr. James Curran.

August

The CDC reported 108 cases of the new disease in the United States.

September

On September 15, NCI sponsored a conference in Bethesda, MD, on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections. Fifty leading clinicians attended.

Fall 1981

Simian acquired immune deficiency syndrome (simian AIDS) was identified in macaques in two of NIH's Regional Primate Centers.

Summer and Fall

Public Health Service (PHS) agency heads discussed the new syndrome at regularly scheduled meetings.

1982

January

On January 15—during a snowstorm that shut down the government—the second AIDS patient seen at NIH was admitted to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases service (NIAID) and was seen by Dr. Anthony S. Fauci.

March

On March 3, a conference on the new disease was held by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) at the CDC in Atlanta. Debate centered on whether the disease was caused by a transmissible or immune-suppressing agent(s).

March

NIAID intramural scientists conducted a study of adenovirus in patients with the new disease.

March

NCI established an Epidemiology Working Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma.

April

NCI intramural researchers conducted a field study to determine the immunological status of healthy homosexual men.

April

NIAID intramural scientists studied immunoregulatory defects, herpes virus isolates, and Epstein-Barr virus and cytomegalovirus in patients with the new disease.

April

Rep. Henry Waxman, congressman from Los Angeles, held the first congressional hearing on the new disease. The CDC estimated that tens of thousands of people would be affected by the disease.

June

NIH Clinical Center (CC) protocol approved to study etiology of immunoregulatory defects in the new disease as a collaborative effort among CC departments, NIAID, NCI, National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Communicative Disorders and Stroke (NINCDS), National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR), National Eye Institute (NEI), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

June

An NIH Working Group to study the new disease was established with representatives from each institute and liaisons from the CDC and FDA.

June

NINCDS investigators provided clinical appraisal of neurological symptoms in CC protocols.

June

NINCDS collaborated on studies of simian AIDS.

June

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) began to compile a bibliography on manifestations of the new disease.

June

On June 30, persuasive evidence that the disease was caused by an infectious agent was presented at a meeting held at the New York Department of Health: cases had been reported in intravenous drug users, homosexuals, hemophiliacs, and Haitians.

July 15

The CDC reported 413 cases of the new disease in the United States with 155 deaths.

July 27

At a meeting in Washington, DC, attended by federal officials, university researchers, community activists, and others, the name "acquired immune deficiency syndrome," or AIDS, was selected for the new disease.

August

NCI issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for research projects related to AIDS. Six grants for this RFA were awarded by NCI and NIAID in May 1983.

September

The CDC reported 593 cases of AIDS in the United States with 243 deaths.

September

The CDC defined a case of AIDS as a disease, at least moderately predictive of a defect in cell-mediated immunity, occurring in a person with no known cause for diminished resistance to that disease.

November

The CDC published formal recommendations for the protection of laboratory and clinical personnel having contact with AIDS patients and clinical specimens. The recommendations were based on those for hepatitis B.

November

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) signed an intra-agency agreement with CDC to evaluate immunological alterations following transfusion with blood or blood products in people with hemophilia, sickle-cell disease, and thalassemia.

December

The CDC reported a case of AIDS caused by blood transfusion in a previously healthy infant.

December

NIH's intramural study of the natural history of the immunodeficiency and consequent opportunistic infections had enrolled 25 patients with AIDS

1983

January

The CDC met with blood banking organizations in Atlanta to discuss proposals to screen out individuals at high risk for AIDS from the blood donor pool. Self-identification through questionnaires or interviews was proposed.

January

The CDC reported cases of AIDS in the female sexual partners of males with AIDS.

March

NHLBI convened a meeting of scientific experts to formulate research recommendations for studies on AIDS and blood transfusion.

March

Epidemiological evidence showed that AIDS primarily affected gay men in San Francisco and New York City. In New Jersey, AIDS patients were primarily intravenous drug users and Haitians, and 68 percent of cases were in African Americans or Latinos.

March

The CDC published guidelines adopted by the PHS requesting members of groups having increased risk for AIDS to refrain from donating blood.

Spring

At the invitation of the Haitian Ministry of Health, Dr. Richard Krause, NIAID director, led a small delegation of NIAID and CDC scientists to Haiti to study the AIDS epidemic there and assist their clinicians.

Spring

NIAID hosted a major meeting of experts in Bethesda, Maryland, to discuss possible etiologies of AIDS. Dr. Albert Sabin summarized the meeting, urging researchers to "cast a wide net."

May

Dr. Luc Montagnier and his collaborators at the Pasteur Institute reported in Science isolating a new retrovirus, LAV, associated with AIDS; they did not claim LAV caused AIDS.

June

The CDC reported 1,641 cases of AIDS in the United States with 644 deaths.

June

The NIH Clinical Center issued precautions for health care workers caring for AIDS patients.

July

NIAID awarded contracts to the New York Blood Center and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to collect specimens from AIDS patients to look for the etiologic agent.
Summer

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issued several statements seeking to calm public fears that AIDS could be contracted casually.

August

NIAID began publishing an informal newsletter, the AIDS Memorandum, through which scientists could share unpublished research findings. This publication lasted for two years until AIDS articles were given expedited publication by mainstream journals.

August

The CDC reported 1,972 cases of AIDS in the United States with 759 deaths.

September

NIDR issued recommendations to practicing dentists about precautions they should take in managing their patients with AIDS.

September

The CDC reported 2,259 cases of AIDS in the United States with 917 deaths.

September

On September 12-13, the NIH Workshop on the Epidemiology of AIDS was held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in Rockville, Maryland.

September

NIAID and NCI launched the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study (MACS) and the San Francisco Men's Health Study (SFMHS) to develop large, comprehensive, longitudinal studies of populations that seemed to be at risk of AIDS. Soon thereafter, NIAID assumed complete responsibility for the program.

October

Projet SIDA, a multidisciplinary study based in Kinshasa, Zaire, was initiated jointly by NIAID, CDC, the Belgian Institute of Tropical Medicine, and the Zairean Ministry of Health.

1984

January

The CDC reported 3,000 cases of AIDS in the United States with 1,283 deaths.

January

NHLBI convened an Ad Hoc Working Group on AIDS and Blood Transfusions.

April

On April 23, DHHS held a press conference where HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler announced that Dr. Robert Gallo of NCI had found the cause of AIDS, the retrovirus HTLV-III. She also announced the development of a diagnostic blood test to identify HTLV-III and expressed hope that a vaccine against AIDS could be produced within two years.

May

Four papers from Dr. Gallo's laboratory demonstrating that the HTLV-III retrovirus was the cause of AIDS were published in Science.

May

NHLBI awarded a contract to establish a volunteer blood donor serum repository for HTLV-III donor/recipient studies.

May

NHLBI, CDC, and FDA cosponsored an AIDS ethics conference.

May

NIDR intramural investigators showed that the AIDS virus can infect not only T4 lymphocytes but also macrophages.

June

Drs. Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier held a joint press conference to announce that Gallo's HTLV-III virus and Montagnier's LAV were almost certainly identical.

June

The CDC reported 4,918 cases of AIDS in the United States with 2,221 deaths.

Summer

Intensive study of the AIDS retrovirus was launched, resulting in findings such as: the CD4 molecule on T4 helper lymphocytes was identified as one receptor by which the AIDS virus entered cells. Genetic sequences of HTLV-III and LAV were determined.

September

A meeting between NCI investigators and Burroughs Wellcome pharmaceutical company was held to discuss plans to test potential drugs as retrovirus inhibitors. The outcome of this meeting was research and development of AZT, the first anti-retroviral drug approved to treat AIDS.

November

On November 2, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci was named NIAID director.

November

Pasteur Institute investigators published the genetic sequence of LAV.

November

The CDC reported 6,993 cases of AIDS in the United States with 3,342 deaths.

Fall

NIAID held a conference at its Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, Montana, on potential animal models for retrovirus infections and their relationship to AIDS.

1985

January

On January 17, NCI scientists and their collaborators published the genome of HTLV-III in Nature.

March

On March 7, the first AIDS antibody test, an ELISA-type test, was released.

April

On April 15-17, the first International AIDS Conference was held in Atlanta, sponsored by NIH, CDC, and FDA; the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration; the Health Resources and Services Administration; and the World Health Organization (WHO). An international network of Collaborating Centres on AIDS was formed.

May

The CDC reported 10,000 cases of AIDS in the United States with 4,942 deaths.

June

The CDC revised the case definition of AIDS to include additional specific disease conditions and to exclude people as AIDS cases if they had a negative result on testing for serum antibody to HTLV-III/LAV.

July

United Press International reported that actor Rock Hudson had AIDS.

September

Indiana teen Ryan White, a hemophiliac suffering from AIDS, was refused entry to school.

September

The U.S. military services began testing for the AIDS virus among its personnel.

October

Rock Hudson died on October 2. He was the first major public figure to die of AIDS. Public fear about AIDS increased dramatically.

December

Publication of a finding that the AIDS virus is present in saliva increased public fears about AIDS.

1986

January

The CDC reported 16,458 cases of AIDS in the United States with 8,361 deaths.

February

NIAID established a Division of AIDS.

May

The name of the AIDS virus was changed to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) at the suggestion of a multinational committee of scientists.

June

At a PHS-sponsored conference at the Coolfont Conference Center in West Virginia, a prediction was made that in 2001, some 270,000 people in the United States would have been diagnosed with AIDS and that 179,000 would have died.

June

NIAID established AIDS Treatment Evaluation Units (ATEUs), which later became AIDS Clinical Trials Units (ACTUs).

July

NHLBI cosponsored with FDA and the NIH Office on Medical Applications of Research a conference on the "Impact of HTLV-III Antibody Testing on the Public Health."

October

The CDC reported that although the incidence of AIDS was rising for all racial/ethnic groups and in all geographic regions of the country, the cumulative incidence of AIDS among blacks and Hispanics was more than three times the rate for whites.

October

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop released his "Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency."

December

The CDC reported 28,098 cases of AIDS in the United States with 15,757 deaths.

1987

February

WHO launched its Global Programme on AIDS

March

The FDA approved AZT as the first antiretroviral drug to be used as a treatment for AIDS.

March

President Ronald Reagan and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac announced a joint agreement settling the dispute arising from the discovery of the AIDS virus, the first international agreement relating to a biomedical research issue to be announced by heads of state.

April

FDA approved the first Western blot blood test—a more specific HIV diagnostic test.

May

The CDC reported that between 1981 and 1987, nine health care workers caring for AIDS patients and having no other risk factors had been infected with HIV.

June

NHLBI awarded a contract to maintain a colony of 50 chimpanzees for studies of post-transfusion HIV infection and AIDS.

August

The CDC reported 40,051 cases of AIDS in the United States with 23,165 deaths.

August

The CDC revised its definition of AIDS to place a greater emphasis on HIV infection status.

August

On August 18, Dr. H. Clifford Lane and his NIAID colleagues began the first U.S. clinical trial at NIH to test an experimental HIV vaccine in humans.

August

NIAID established the AIDS Vaccine Evaluation Group (AVEG), a network of clinical sites to conduct trials of experimental HIV vaccines.

Fall

The NIH Office of the Director launched its Targeted Antiviral Program to encourage intramural analysis of the three-dimensional structure of HIV and to determine the shape of protein-bound drugs.

October

Cleve Jones made the first panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt in memory of his friend Marvin Feldman.

October

NIAID established 17 Clinical Study Groups (CSGs) to extend to a wider geographical area access to clinical trials of promising AIDS therapies.

December

The CDC released the results of a study on the prevalence of HIV infection in the United States, indicating a shifting emphasis toward defining AIDS as "infection with HIV" rather than by defining particular "indicator diseases" that characterized late-stage AIDS.

1988

January

The CDC updated the International Classification of Diseases codes for HIV infection for use with U.S. morbidity and mortality data.

January

The CDC published guidelines developed for educational efforts to combat AIDS.

February

On February 12, trimetrexate was the first AIDS drug granted pre-approval distribution status under new FDA regulations. The drug was used to treat *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia in AIDS patients who could not tolerate standard treatments.

March

A total of 136 countries or territories reported a total of 84,256 cases of AIDS to the WHO Global Programme on AIDS.

April

The NIH reported that between 1981 and 1988, two workers in laboratories producing large quantities of HIV had been infected with HIV, and it issued biosafety recommendations for laboratories.

April

NIAID established an AIDS reagent repository to catalogue and expedite the availability of experimental materials used in AIDS research.

June

The CDC reported that a new AIDS case was reported every 14 minutes.

June

The brochure "Understanding AIDS," prepared by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop in collaboration with the CDC, was mailed to every household in the United States.

June

NIAID and NICHD established an epidemiologic study of HIV transmission during pregnancy and birth, the Women and Infants Transmission Study (WITS).

August

The CDC reported 72,024 cases of AIDS in the United States and estimated that 1 to 1.5 million Americans were infected with HIV.

August

NIAID's AIDS Vaccine Evaluation Units initiated their first study of an experimental AIDS vaccine.

September

The World Health Organization reported that 111,000 cases of AIDS had been documented worldwide. Authorities at WHO placed the actual number of cases, including those unreported, at 250,000.

September

NIDR investigators reported that saliva inhibits transmission of HIV.

October

AIDS protestors, demanding a quicker approval process for drug treatments, shut down the FDA.

October

On October 13, NIAID established three programs: the Centers for AIDS Research (CFARS) to improve the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of AIDS; the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Units (Pediatric ACTUs), a network of clinical sites to test experimental HIV drugs in children; and the Programs for Excellence in Basic Research (PEBRA), to develop novel strategies to determine how HIV causes disease.

November

NIAID established the International Collaborations in AIDS Research (ICAR) program to encourage studies of AIDS in Africa, Mexico, and Brazil.

November

NIAID established the Clinical Programs for Clinical Research on AIDS (CPCRA) to involve community physicians in AIDS research.

November

A CDC study revealed that 3 of every 1,000 college students are infected with HIV.

November

The NIH Office of AIDS Research (OAR) was established.

November

On November 21, FDA licensed Intron A and Roferon A (human alpha interferon injection) for the treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma.

November

On November 28, FDA authorized pre-approval distribution of ganciclovir under a treatment IND protocol for the treatment of cytomegalovirus retinitis in AIDS patients.

December

NIAID funds a natural history study, HATS, in male and female heterosexuals at high risk of AIDS who are not IV drug users. The study is modeled on the MACS.

December

On December 1, WHO's Global Programme on AIDS instituted the first World AIDS Day as an annual event.

December

On December 22, Dr. Samuel Broder was named NCI director.